

Minister
of National Defence



Ministre
de la Défense nationale

Ottawa, Canada K1A 0K2

MAY 03 2021

The Honourable Bill Blair, PC, MP
Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness
Public Safety Canada
269 Laurier Avenue West
Ottawa ON K1A 0P8

Dear Colleague:

As you are aware, since 2014 the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) has provided personnel to perform ceremonial sentry duties at the National War Memorial/Tomb of the Unknown Soldier each summer beginning on April 9 (the anniversary of the Battle of Vimy Ridge) and ending on November 10 (the day prior to Remembrance Day). The CAF also conducts Ceremonial Guard duties at Rideau Hall, normally during the months of July and August.

Following the attack on the sentries at the National War Memorial/Tomb of the Unknown Soldier on October 22, 2014, the Ottawa Police Service (OPS) provided on-site sentry security protection for the remainder of the 2014 and 2015 seasons. In 2016, the National War Memorial underwent a major renovation and the National Sentry Program was not conducted. In 2017, 2018, 2019 and 2020, the OPS was unable to provide on-site security due to resource constraints, resulting in the CAF providing sentry security, based on requests for assistance from the Minister of Public Safety. For the upcoming 2021 season, the OPS has also confirmed that it will not be able to provide on-site security.

Taking into account the COVID-19 situation and the level of support the CAF has dedicated to supporting the national pandemic response, it has been decided that the Ceremonial Guard duties at Rideau Hall will not be conducted for the 2021 season. However, in order to provide a visible reminder to the people of Canada that the CAF continues to serve Canadians with pride and resilience, the National Sentry Program at the National War Memorial/Tomb of the Unknown Soldier will be conducted. I have assessed that dedicated on-site sentry security remains a requirement and is in the national interest. I therefore request that you consider the provision of personnel from federal resources to fulfill the necessary on-site sentry security requirements at the National War Memorial/Tomb of the Unknown Soldier for the upcoming 2021 program.

Canada

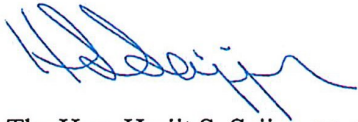
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Should federal resources not be available to provide the necessary on-site sentry security, I am prepared to receive a request for assistance from you, pursuant to s. 273.6(2) of the *National Defence Act*, which would request that I direct the CAF to provide the on-site sentry security at the National War Memorial/Tomb of the Unknown Soldier from date of commencement, which is currently under assessment due to the COVID-19 environment, until November 10, 2021.

In accordance with the Treasury Board's Directive on Charging and Special Financial Authorities, the Department of National Defence would capture all incremental costs associated with potential services provided and may seek cost recovery from Public Safety Canada. An estimate for incremental costs would be communicated once it is available.

Thank you for your consideration.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'H. Sajjan', with a stylized flourish at the end.

The Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan, PC, OMM, MSM, CD, MP